

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated October 20, 2003, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on January 20, 2003. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-11 remain pending in the application and are shown above with new claims 12-20. Claims 1, 3 and 5-9 are rejected, claims 2 and 11 are objected to and claims 4 and 10 are indicated to be allowable by the Examiner. Reconsideration of the rejected claims is requested for reasons presented below.

Claim Objections

Claims 2 and 11 stand objected to because of various informalities.

Applicant has amended claims 2 and 11 to correct the informalities pointed out by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection and allowance of claims 2 and 11.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3 and 5-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Itoya* (US 3,972,547) in view of *Meripol* (US 3,248,135).

In the Response to Arguments of the office action, the Examiner states that the distal end of *Itoya's* collar that threadingly engages member (10) would be straight, as would the threaded portion of member (10). The Examiner further states that this would not result in any leakage due to the conicity (the helical threaded engagement) of the external surface of the packing and the mating internal surface of the locking member. The Examiner additionally states that whether the threaded engagement is helical/conical or straight, the sealing ability of the joint would be the same.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1, 3 and 5-9. Applicant submits that a modification in view of *Meripol* to provide a threaded conical external surface to a packing member as disclosed in *Itoya* destroys the sealing purpose of the packing member in *Itoya* regardless of whether there is a straight distal end as suggested by the Examiner. Both straight threads and conical threads provide a

helical fluid path for leakage. In this manner, the threads in both *Meripol* and *Itoya* fail to provide a seal. The sealing effect in *Itoya* is provided by abutting the packing member against an inclined portion of a locking member, whereby the stress is exerted against the circumference of a pipe so that the joined portion is sufficiently sealed. See, *Itoya* at col. 1, ll. 23-27 and col. 3, ll. 13-19. Note that sealing elements 36, 38 and 40 adjacent segmented slips 28 are required to provide the seal in the slip joint disclosed in *Meripol*. Modifying the packing member disclosed in *Itoya* to have the threaded conical exterior surface causes the threads to bind-up or the packing member to tighten against the pipe prior to the packing member abutting the locking member such that the sealing effect required in *Itoya* is destroyed. If the threaded conical exterior surface permits abutment of the modified packing member against the locking member in order to provide the sealing effect as required in *Itoya*, then the abutment destroys the improved gripping effect provided by the conical surfaces since the packing member is prevented from further tightening or gripping of the pipe. Thus, it would not have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide a conical threaded inner surface on the locking member disclosed in *Itoya* and a mating conical threaded external surface on the packing member disclosed in *Itoya*.

Itoya in view of *Meripol* does not teach, show, or suggest a connector for connecting the end portion of a tubular that includes at least one connecting device for equipment/tools, the connector including parts that can be screwed together and have aligned bores for the accommodation of the tubular end portion, which is to be secured in the connector in the screwed-together condition of the parts, the connector further including a radially inner transversally shrinkable adapter sleeve, which is to bear, in a connected position, at its inner circumferential surface in a clamping manner against the outer jacket surface of the pipe end portion, wherein the adapter sleeve exhibits an external, conically extending threaded jacket surface, which cooperates with a surrounding outer adapter and connector sleeve with an internal, conically extending threaded circumferential surface, the outer adapter and connector sleeve being formed to cooperate with a threaded jacket portion of a socket-like connecting element formed on an end piece of the connecting device, as recited in claim 1 and claims 3, 5-7, and 9 dependent thereon. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 1, 3, 5-7 and 9.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 2 stands objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, and if the above noted objections are overcome.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 2 is allowable based on the traversal herein to claim 1, which claim 2 depends from. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claim 2.

Claim 11 stands objected to but would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the above noted objections.

Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments presented herein obviate the objection. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claim 11.

Claims 4 and 10 stand allowed.

Applicant appreciates allowance of claims 4 and 10. Additionally, Applicant submits that new claims 12-20 are allowable based on their dependency to claim 10.

Conclusion

The references cited by the Examiner, alone or in combination, do not teach, show, or suggest the invention as claimed. Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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